gitk is a graphical history viewer. Think of it like a powerful GUI shell over git log and git grep

Gitk is easiest to invoke from the command-line. Just cd into a Git repository, and type:

$ gitk [git log options]

Gitk accepts many command-line options, most of which are passed through to the underlying git log action. Probably one of the most useful is the --all flag, which tells gitk to show commits reachable from *any* ref, not just HEAD.

git-gui, on the other hand, is primarily a tool for crafting commits. It, too, is easiest to invoke from the command line:

$ git gui